REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION POLICY

I. **INTRODUCTION**

It is the goal of the Alexandria City Public Schools to ensure that each student, with support for his or her unique circumstances, will graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills necessary for higher education, multiple career paths, and active citizenship. Specifically, the *Equity for All 2025* Strategic Plan strives to eliminate "achievement gaps among underserved student populations" so that "all students will graduate from high school prepared for college, careers, and life." Its "Instructional Excellence" goal declares, "ACPS will ensure that all students have access to and engagement with high-quality instruction." It is the responsibility of the Alexandria City Public Schools to provide all students with a rigorous, relevant, and internationally-benchmarked education that enables them to achieve at the highest levels of proficiency. Accomplishing this responsibility requires a multifaceted approach as outlined in the following regulations:

II. **STANDARDS**

1. The Virginia Standards of Learning (SOLs) provide the minimal foundation for the school division's curriculum and assessment program.

2. The SOLs shall be enhanced through the design and implementation of rigorous instructional units using the backward-design process. This process will clearly articulate the following curriculum design elements: (a) alignment of each curriculum unit with relevant Virginia SOLs, (b) unit transfer goals, (c) essential questions, (d) enduring understandings, (e) expected learner outcomes (i.e., what students will be able to know and do by the conclusion of the unit), (f) balanced assessments (diagnostic/formative/summative), and (g) a learning plan that will actively challenge and engage students in the learning process.

III. **INSTRUCTION**

1. All students shall be given opportunities to succeed in meeting or exceeding the standards and related benchmark assessments**.** Some students may require more time and academic supports than others to be successful. These students should be afforded the opportunity to spend additional time on tasks. Additionally, evidence-based interventions will be provided in order to help students achieve the prescribed standard(s).

2. The delivery of instruction shall ensure that all students have access to the standard curriculum and are rigorously challenged through planned differentiation and instructional scaffolding. These processes support varying degrees of student readiness, learning profiles, and levels of English-language proficiency.

3. At the beginning of each course taught at the secondary level, students and parents/guardians shall be given in writing a syllabus that includes: (a) A list of standards and benchmarks to be met or exceeded; (b) An explanation of the various ways in which

47 student learning will be evaluated; (c) Student expectations in terms of assignments,
48 skills to be demonstrated, required resources; and (d) The teacher's grading system.
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50 4. Each syllabus shall be written in student- and parent-friendly language, free of
51 educational jargon, and shall be posted on ACPS' online platform for easy access.
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53 5. Similar information, as is age-appropriate, is provided at the elementary level.
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55 IV. **ASSESSMENT**
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57 1. Assessment must involve a combination of measures designed to:
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59 • Diagnose/pre-assess students' varying readiness levels, background knowledge,
60   interests, and learner profiles.
61 • Provide criterion-based formative assessment feedback to students to allow them to
62   adjust their learning to move toward achieving or surpassing designated lesson and
63   unit standards.
64 • Engage students in a range of summative assessment tasks (including culminating
65   performance tasks, projects, and tests) to serve as a basis for judgment and evaluation
66   of cumulative performance at key juncture points during the grading period.
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68 2. Teachers will use multiple assessments to evaluate student mastery of the skills and
69   content taught in their courses. Examples of acceptable assessment tools include but are
70   not limited to the following:
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72 • Culminating projects
73 • Performance assessment tasks (e.g., academic prompts)
74 • Constructed-response test and quiz items
75 • Selected-response test and quiz items
76 • Student self-assessments (e.g., using rubrics for self-monitoring in relationship to
77   standards mastery, self-reflections, journal entries)
78 • Peer response group feedback
79 • Daily criterion-based assessment feedback (teacher-to-student)
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81 3. Formative assessment feedback must be provided daily to ensure that students understand
82   what they are learning and why they are learning it. It should provide criterion-based
83   feedback designed to help students adjust their learning to achieve lesson mastery
84   objectives. Additionally, formative assessment feedback should allow students to revisit,
85   revise, and enhance their knowledge, skills, and understandings to ensure that they are
86   progressing toward successful completion of required summative assessments (to be used
87   as a basis for grading).
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89 4. Teachers will create and provide students with scoring rubrics and exemplars of
90   acceptable student work in advance of major projects and related performance-based
91   assessment tasks.
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5. In collaboration with colleagues, teachers are encouraged to review and evaluate work to build consistency and inter-rater reliability.

6. In collaboration with the teacher and his/her best professional judgment, students shall be expected and permitted to revisit and review their work (e.g., performance assessment tasks, tests, quizzes, essays, research reports, etc.) in all instances where it is clear that additional study, effort, and time will produce improved performance and achievement. This process is not intended to suggest that students be permitted to retake tests and related assessments automatically for grade adjustment; this opportunity depends upon the instructor's determination of the appropriateness and viability of the decision to allow retakes or resubmissions.

7. The teacher and student shall revisit the learner's work if, in the teacher's professional judgment, progress and effort are being made to meet or exceed standards as delineated by the course syllabus. Typically, this can be accomplished through multiple formative assessments and reassessments that lead to the student's successful completion of a summative assessment task or work product.

8. The final grade awarded for reassessment performance shall reflect the student's mastery of identified course standards and task-specific performance indicators.

9. Reassessment for final exams and other end-of-year assessments shall occur only in extraordinary circumstances.

V. **ACCOUNTABILITY**

1. Administrators shall put into place in each school those procedures and practices which fully implement these regulations.

2. The Superintendent, or designee, shall ensure that student achievement is evaluated across all grade levels on an ongoing and consistent basis. The criteria, indicators, standards, and benchmarks must be related to ACPS' curriculum and meet the goals of the ACPS Strategic Plan.

VI. **DEFINITIONS**

1. **Academic Prompt:** a structured performance assessment task with a clearly articulated format, audience, topic, and purpose.

2. **Assessment:** using standards-based performance criteria to draw inferences about individual student progress and performance, and required interventions to ensure improvement.

3. **Asynchronous (Distance) Learning**: When a group of students learn the same material at different times and locations. Some examples include prerecorded classes using online

platforms, learning packets, repeats of teacher-created, televised lessons for PreK and Kindergarten students and pre-recorded read alouds on the ACPS Story Hour.

4. **Backward-Design Process:** a process for designing curriculum (programs, courses of study, units, lessons) based upon a three-stage model:
(a) Stage One (desired results);
(b) Stage Two (assessment evidence); and
(c) Stage Three (learning plan).

5. **Balanced Assessments:** using a range of formal and informal assessment evidence to monitor and adjust student progress toward designated standards, rather than a single assessment task such as a test or quiz.

6. **Benchmarks:** performance criteria and related assessment tasks designed to assess and evaluate student achievement of identified standards during a specific time period within a unit, course of study, or grade level.

7. **Big Ideas:** words and phrases that represent conceptually significant themes, patterns, and unifying ideas that unify a curriculum content area (e.g., interdependency, humanity's search for meaning, using data to analyze patterns in nature).

8. **Constructed-Response Test Item:** a test item that requires some form of student-generated product or performance rather than selection among a list of items. For example, a brief or extended written response to a question is considered a constructed-response item.

9. **Culminating Project:** a complex performance task that requires students to demonstrate authentic application and real-world transfer of core unit standards. A project represents long-term work in which students must demonstrate standards proficiency with a high level of independence.

10. **Curriculum:** a system for facilitating student learning comprised of the following key elements: (a) the written curriculum: i.e., course/grade-level documents with clearly described units that articulate desired results, recommended assessments, and a learning plan; (b) the assessed curriculum, i.e., those aspects of the curriculum that are formally assessed and evaluated by all instructors teaching the same course or grade-level content; (c) the taught curriculum, the instructional delivery process guided and informed by the written and assessed curriculum; (d) the supported curriculum, i.e., the materials, resources, and time given to support viable curriculum implementation; and (e) the learned curriculum, i.e., what students actually achieve and retain as a result of studying the written curriculum.

11. **Daily Criterion-Based Assessment Feedback:** formative assessment designed to ensure that all students receive daily feedback aligned with lesson standards to help them adjust their learning and progress toward proficiency.

12. **Diagnostic/Pre-Assessment:** formal and informal assessments designed to determine students' background knowledge and preparation for successful completion of a lesson or unit. Diagnosis/pre-assessment is necessary for differentiated instruction to occur.

13. **Enduring Understandings:** statements that communicate to students the big ideas of a unit or course of study, emphasizing the conceptual patterns, themes, and recurring ideas that unify curriculum content. Enduring understandings represent the core ideas and processes that are worth revisiting and have lasting value beyond the classroom.

14. **Equality:** Treating all people the same.

15. **Equity:** Empowering students, families and staff through building relationships and nurturing capability to collectively remove barriers that prevent anyone from achieving his or her aspirations. **Educational equity** is meeting students where they are; not necessarily where the school division expects them to be. The education provided by ACPS will respond to each student's individual challenges, interests, and abilities, and each student will be provided with the tools needed to excel. **Racial Equity:** When race does not determine quality of life, opportunities and outcomes. Equity is at the center of everything ACPS does as a school division. It challenges staff members to ensure that students are engaged in classroom instruction and have access to the educational resources needed to enhance their learning experiences. It ensures that ACPS schools are a safe, friendly and welcoming environment for all. It also sets clear division-wide priorities and programs to address opportunity and achievement gaps, and ensures that all students graduate ready for college, careers and life.

16. **Essential Questions:** open-ended, interpretive questions that encourage students to revisit, debate, and investigate the important issues, problems, themes, and problems underlying a discipline or content area.

17. **Evidence-Based Interventions:** instructional strategies and tactics confirmed by educational research to have a high level of positive impact upon individual student achievement and group performance.

18. **Evaluation:** making judgments about the quality of student performance and levels of achievement, including grading student performance based upon identified criteria.

19. **Formative Assessment:** ongoing formal and informal assessment evidence and processes designed to give students immediate feedback to help them adjust their learning process and progress toward standards proficiency.

20. **Instructional Scaffolding:** moving students along a learning continuum from acquisition to constructed meaning toward guided and independent transfer by organizing learning according to growing levels of proficiency (e.g., from basic to proficient to independent application).

21. **Internationally-Benchmarked Education:** an educational system aligned with

evidence-based instructional and assessment practices designed to ensure that all students are equipped for both post-secondary educational success and success in the modern workplace.

22. **Inter-Rater Reliability:** ensuring that when groups of educators are reviewing and evaluating student work, they have a common understanding of evaluation criteria and are reliable and consistent in their application of those criteria.

23. **Learning Plan:** Stage Three of the backward design process. A successful learning plan articulates key learning experiences, sequenced assessment tasks, and suggestions for differentiation based upon learner needs, interests, and learning profiles.

24. **Learning Profile:** a profile of students' learning preferences, including modality preferences and cognitive styles.

25. **Planned Differentiation:** ensuring that students' differing readiness levels, interests, and learning profiles are an ongoing part of lesson and unit planning, assessment, and implementation.

26. **Performance Assessment Tasks:** assessment tasks that require students' engagement in performance-based applications of what they have learned. Such tasks ensure that students are required to demonstrate guided or independent transfer, rather than mechanical memorization or rote modeling of teacher behaviors.

27. **Rubric/Scoring Rubric:** a scoring guide that enables teachers to make reliable judgments about student work and students to self-assess.

28. **Selected-Response Test Item:** test items requiring students to choose from a given set of items (e.g., multiple choice, true/false).

29. **The Standard Curriculum:** a common core curriculum that requires all students to learn the same rigorous content and achieve proficiency relative to identified performance standards.

30. **Student Interventions:** may include student and parent/guardian conferences, referrals to community resources, engagement with the school's Student Support Team, referrals to substance abuse supports, etc. Interventions are individualized based upon the reasons for a pattern of late and/or missing assignments or nonattendance.

31. **Student Self-Assessments:** assessment tasks that engage students in the process of self-assessment and self-regulation, based upon performance criteria articulated by the teacher via rubrics, checklists, and related formats.

32. **Summative Assessment:** culminating assessments at the end of a unit used to judge students' level of standards mastery. Summative assessments can include cornerstone anchor projects and performance tasks as well as unit examinations.

33. **Syllabus:** a formal outline of a course or grade level content. A syllabus should be presented to students as a guide to inform their understanding of where they are going and why they are going there. Typically, a syllabus includes a clear description of learning goals/objectives, unit focus areas, and related assignments and resource requirements.

34. **Synchronous (Distance) Learning:** When a group of students engage in learning at the same time. Examples include classes and weekly check-ins using distance-learning platforms, or daily, televised lessons using content provided by ACPS teachers.

35. **Task-Specific Performance Indicators:** evaluation criteria articulated in a task-specific rubric and designed to communicate to students significant performance areas and related performance behaviors required for a specific score.

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Cross Refs.:   IFA   Assessment and Evaluation
                IGBI   Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment Classes
                IKB   Course Assignments-Secondary
                IKB-R   Regulations Governing the Course Assignments Policy
                IKC   Grading
                IKC-R   Regulations Governing the Grading Policy
                IKCA   Reports to Parents/Guardians
                IKD   Instructional Assignments-Elementary
                IKD-R   Regulations Pertaining to Instructional Assignments-Elementary
                IKE   Academic Promotion and Retention
                IKE-R   Regulations for Academic Promotion and Retention
                IKEB   Acceleration
                IKEB-R   Acceleration Regulations